1100a

William Sebastian (Bill) Borba (1886-1971)Interview
Date Made: 1963
Tape Given to the Western Sonoma County Historical Society

Mr. Borba is speaking to a group, the questions came from the audience (A) and a moderator (M)

M: Any questions?
A: I asked him do you remember that song?
BB: Yes, Any rags, any bones, any bottles today? That's where it came from, the rag man.

A: Can I ask you a personal question? Did you know Steve Daum (sp?)
BB: Yes
A: when did he come here?
BB: I don't know, I can find out, I'd have to look at some of my history.
A: If I recall correctly....

BB: It started before, the time I came in , it was a two room school

A: Was this grammar school.
BB: Yes, that's all. High school in Santa Rosa. The train left here at half past 6 in the morning, half past 7 and came in half past 10 and out at 3 o'clock and back at half past 6. So they went on the steam train and had to bum around Santa Rosa until half past 6. Some rode bicycles and bicycles were $19 (90?), the old racing bicycles with the ram's horn handles or they drove, a few drove buggies. There were very few people went to high school from here. And the boys here, the people here were rather grown up or nearly 18, 19 years old and in school yet. Because in the winter time they couldn't get across the crick and in summer time they had to work, like the Arkansas Traveler couldn't fix his roof when it was raining and when it wasn't raining he didn't need it.

A: Well Bill, you might also say that....

M: The question by Dr. Hansen was if Mr. Borba remembered Luther Burbank. And may I say at one time he worked for Mr. Burbank and I'll have him tell you about it.

BB: It was my brother. Yes Mr. Burbank had that 30 acres up there. At one time he owned the Masonic cemetery where the Green Lawn is. He bought that and sold it back to the Masons, bought it off them. When he was confined, he never worked over there at all, that was in pine trees. He was confined from there down the hill and back 32 acres.

A: You might put in there....(laughter from group)

BB: He was working in adobe. There was a little Irishman out here where the Grange Hall is, that was the Kelly ranch and Pat was quite fond of drinks. I can see him bleary eyed yet and he used to say..had a large family, an Irishman, and he used to say there was 15 minutes in a year you could work adobe ("dobe") and that was 15 minutes after midnight on New Year's eve and who was sober enough to work it then. Then there is 3 days in the year you can work "dobe" but no one has ever been around those 3 days.

M:

It is interesting to note that Sonoma County has had 3 people who got to be world fame. Course one of those is jack London who was born in San Francisco, spent some time in Oakland and finally, of course died in Glen Ellen, over at Valley of the Moon. Another was Luther Burbank who of course was born in Massachusetts but came to Santa Rosa when he was 26 years of age and finally died at the age of 77. The only native son to attain prominence was Robert L. Ripley of Believe it or not fame who was born in Santa Rosa and graduated from Santa Rosa high school and made his early fame in California before going east with the Hearst syndicate.

BB: These films I am now showing you show the industry around Sebastopol in the early 20s and 30s. The apple orchards as you know, the Gravenstein apple was supposed to have originated in Germany in the district of Swartz...Holstein. The word gravensteen is pronounced "Gravenstein" in German and supposedly either (near a) gravestone. This apple grows wild and primarily around abandoned cemeteries (...our own county) and it is believed from that the apple got its name. Believed to have been brought to Fort Ross in 1814 by the Russians and planted there. Then a man by the name of Pepper who had a gross nursery in Petaluma and only last week I visited the site and his home is still standing. I believed he had gone to Fort Ross and taken grafts or scions as they are called, off these trees and grafted them and started these apple industry as far as the Gravenstein itself is concerned. This apple is believed to be one of the finest eating apples possibly in the world but it not a good keeper and makes a very light dried apple and some wonderful apple sauce but they have to be picked so green that it doesn't mature like most apples from the sugar content. it has a tendency to wither. The other industry that I am showing you are the packing houses. This packing house #11 was known as the Sebastopol Apple Grower's Union and they had six packing houses, #1 was where the Purity store stands today and here you'll notice the mixture of horses and trucks and model T Fords. They were just beginning then to use trucks and autos to come to and from the packing houses and haul their fruit. So you still see many horse drawn vehicles. Fort Ross, the preservation of Fort Ross (as it) stands today can be credited to our congressman, Scudder who at that time was an assemblyman in Sacramento and a member of the Native Sons. As you know the Native Sons while it is a (sick?) benefit society its main function was charity and history. And you'll see throughout the State hundreds and hundreds of bronze tablets mounted on stones and buildings noting the historic places in the state and the line at the bottom saying they were installed by the grand parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden West. We got interested in Fort Ross and Mr. Scudder was able to secure from the State enough oil in 5 gallon cans that we would go up there every year and and climb over this fort with this old church. With ropes and ladders and paint the church with oil to preserve the building. About this time I got interested in the fact that the Russians had not been, for 100 years, had not been near this place and I went to the Russian orthodox church at Green and Van Ness Ave. (in San Francisco) and got them interested in coming up and doing a service there again. We were very, we, the Natives and a lot of our neighbors and friends had gone up the day before on a Saturday and got the place cleaned up and these Russians were supposed to arrive Sunday morning and it was half past two in the afternoon when they showed up and it was a sight never to be forgotten. Them days the taxi cabs were nothing but a square box mounted on some hard riding springs. And they were really yellow cabs from the yellow cab company. This was considered

a picnic trip and the drivers of these 15 taxi cabs bid on the job, everybody wanted to go, it was near Santa Rosa and a holiday for the drivers and when they got near Santa Rosa why the russians didn't know where they were going and they kept saying its just a little further, its just a little further. They went up through Guerneville and down the river to Austin Creek and up Austin Creek through Cazadera (Cazadero) and over the hill and today that road is paved that I would remind you in the days I'm speaking of, they were dirt roads and you can imagine the condition and half past two in the afternoon these cabs begin to arrive. They came down a 3 mile hill, from the top of the ridge end of Fort Ross with their brakes afire and scared to death because these were San Francisco drivers who drove a hill a block or two long but had never driven grades as long as 3 miles down and 4 and 5 miles up and they had come over this road from Cazadera and I remember one of them jumping out of the cab and taking his cap and trying to pull it in two and jumping on it with both feet and kicking the wheel of his car. The man acted like he was insane, he was so badly scared it wasn't funny. These people arrived with nothing but ordinary light coats, of course expecting it was near Santa Rosa and they were going back the same day. That evening at 6 o'clock we had made arrangements with the hotel up on the hill for the women to go up there an stay over night and they were very peculiar people, very sheepish people, there seemed to be anybody in charge of them. We'd go to the priest that was with them and what seemed to be the head men and nobody would say just what was to be done. We had a lot of abalone chowder left over from our own dinner and these people bought some chickens from Calls and cleaned them right then and there and along with the clam chowder we managed to feed them that night and at 9 o'clock at night they still hadn't told us where they were gonna go or what they were gonna do. So they gathered on the beach and this was a crack Russian choir, all graduates of the Moscow Conservatory of Music and used to sing regularly on old KPO, radio station before the days of television. This night was a foggy night of course, fog drifting over a bright moonlight night. As the fog would drift over in patches, let the moon shine and then cover it again, these people were singing on the beach and it was something never to be forgotten. I attended grand operas, 8 of them and heard a lot of good music but i never heard anything as impressive as this night. The next day, they slept on the beach, just with their coats, just what they had with them, slept in the sand along with a little vodka, coffee, why we all had a very good time and they'd done a wonderful job of singing. And the next day they returned to San Francisco by their taxi cab and you imagine the bill they had to pay when they kept these drivers out overnight, two day cost on what should have been a one day journey. Speaking of the gravenstein apple, we had a tree in Sebastopol, a giant gravenstein tree out on Green Valley Road on the Mel Kauffman ranch that they had to take 18 trees out around it to accommodate this tree. it was over, in the neighborhood of 90 foot across. Was all of some 25-30 foot high. 20 ft. ladders which is about as high a ladder they use in the orchards and then weren't able to get all the apples out of the top of the tree. Not counting those apples that were on the ground, it was a 114 boxes of choice apples taken off this tree and taken in the packing houses to be processed. I believe it is about as large a tree as ever been known. This tree had a peculiar habit, you can't prune it while its young and keep it small. The way of its growth is hard to explain but as you prune it it continues to get larger and larger until the tree becomes so unwieldy they eventually die of old age and are taken out. I don't remember in my earlier talks of mentioning the wineries and a very serious error because there were dozens of them around Sebastopol. This big building that you see as you come in or go out to Santa Rosa just as you cross the railroad tracks on the right was a winery for years and years and the day the red building, still in use, known now as the California Food products Company and pretty near every small

ranch, small vineyard had a small winery of its own. I don't know whether I mentioned, Jesse Hunt was responsible for the development of the apple and berry industry and one of his sons lives on the corner or Ragle Road and Bodega Ave, Dick Hunt ..his brother in law, Mr. Morford operated the dairy fields where Taniguichi's dryers are now on Spring Hill and this is where the Borba's and Scudder's for 9 years picked Lawton berries. Mr. Hunt was the father of the Hunt boys built the famous Hunt Bros. cannery in Hayward. Now known as Hunt Industries. I believe I mentioned that Bloomfield had about 600 Chinese. Sebastopol had two Chinatowns that must have had in the neighborhood of 200-300 Chinese in them. One of them started where our Chamber of commerce building stands and run back as far as the vinegar works along what is now a city street and there were houses on both sides. This one, a very startling incident occurred, a Chinese tong war. A Chinese hatchet man came up from San Francisco and he hired a local one-eye frog fisherman by the name of Low Mong (spelling?) to shoot one of the local Chinese. Low Mong with only one eye and aiming through a knot hole in a fence missed his mark, didn't hurt anybody and that was the only incident we had with the Chinese of any disturbance of any kind. In spite of that we boys used to throw rocks at them and annoy them. The other Chinatown was across the way where Pellini's Chevrolet (is).
(pause, restart of tape)? changes subject.

BB: All those songs we used to hear on KPO, and the fog was coming in a bright moon light night and the fog would pass. The ocean roar. These wonderful songs. They were graduates of Russian Conservatory of Music. ....it was indescribable)

(repeats himself about Fort Ross experience and Russians from SF)

thank you to Bill from Moderator.
Part 2 (new talk?)

BB: I'm going to make corrections to some of my previous statements, in talking about the bones that the butcher gave us. I forgot to mention that we were a large and poor family, I think I told you before money for play time was very scarce. Mostly pennies and nickels running errands for neighbors were turned in to mother. We were allowed to collect these bones and bottles and the like, rags, and the money we received from the rags, bottles and sacks man was the money we used to go to the circus in Santa Rosa, we would walk along the railroad track or we would get a ride with a farmer. I also forgot to mention that the ministers and doctors wore cutaway coats. I should have said Prince Albert coats, the coat that came down just about the knee. And the lodge I forgot to mention along with the Masons and Odd Fellows was the Native Sons Lodge which was instituted in 1877. Other characters that I might have mentioned that were not addicted to liquor, the great scientist Dr. Libby graduated from Analy High school. Sports writer, my brother, who worked for the San Francisco Examiner who was considered one of the best football writers on the Coast. Several dentists and doctors and several ministers. Speaking of the wonderful country we lived in and life was wonderful because it was cooler then most of the county and it got warmer as you went north through Cloverdale, Healdsburg and when you came out in the fog, I forgot to mention that it was at Eureka that you came out of the fog. One of the characters that I mentioned, John Saunders, I forgot to give you his battle cry. He used a battle cry, the battle cry of the Boston Tea party in the revolution. "Liberty, poverty, and no stamps, tear down the banner." and he would shout that with a growl that would cause us children to get out of his way because we were afraid of him. though he was perfectly harmless and the statement about the

building of the railroads, I could not remember the name of the 4th one, the Crocker, Huntington, Hopkins and Leland Stanford who built Stanford University is the fourth one, they were known as the big four.

About the earthquake, my dad had got at five o'clock in the morning, ruther, had left, dad had cooked his breakfast, packed his lunch and was a quarter of a mile from the house at 5:13 in the morning. And he was walking, top of the Watertrough Hill on Freestone Road to prune all day. When the telephone office stands now, runs I believe one of the largest driers in the world, an immense thing, and as dad was passing it walking along the county road the earthquake hit. And this building started to fall and he ran off the county road to get away from it and come to within a fraction of an inch of getting killed from the falling drier. He said at the time, that a row of gum trees extending from Florence Avenue down to where the present telephone office is, some trees running about 40 ft. high or so, they appeared to him to be hitting the ground as the ground moved in a long, high (rolled?) just like ocean waves and as these waves would pass the trees would rock violently from side to side, appearing to strike the ground. I was shaken out of bed and called my younger brother to get the baby and I rushed to the front window, I don't know where I was going as I was in the upper floor. Started to open the window and across the street on Florence Ave., the (area) were all apple orchards at that time, it appeared to me the ground was still moving and these apple trees were also swinging back and forth and touching the ground. When we arrived at, as I told you before, at Sebastopol on a branch of the California and Northern Pacific Railroad which is now the California-Northwestern. There was no further transportation here except by horse and stage that used to go through the towns of Freestone and Occidental and up the coast to Santa Rosa. Until 1904, they started building electric railroads all over California, electric system in Los Angeles and Northern electric into Sacramento and the electric railroad to Chico. there was an epidemic of electric railroad building. Among them Sebastopol received a beautiful electric railroad starting in Petaluma and coming to Sebastopol and on to Forestville with a branch line into Santa Rosa. They had 3 of the prettiest palace cars I've ever seen. These were long cars looking a great deal like a steam railroad passenger car but they were finished inside, beautifully finished and the motorman sat behind the plate glass partition which was set fastenly carved by brass grill all highly polished. They had three of these. The people who built the railroad of course were looking for all the money they could get out of it. They painted all the poles on the railroad green, painted all the stations which was all right but the painting of the poles gave them an extra profit. Instead of putting up only one trolley wire, they put up two trolley wires. The two trolley wires were in the same bracket so they were not separated or insulated from one another and this way they got hundreds of pounds of copper hanging on wires that were no use because one trolley was all they needed and eventually when the copper got high that wire was taken down and sold. These cars used to run every hour to Petaluma, to Santa Rosa and every hour and half to Forestville, and every hour and three quarters to Petaluma and the children going to high school from Santa Rosa, Llano District would come in on the cars and those from Forestville and instead of getting off at the station at the high school they would come downtown and then all walk back up to the high school and otherwise children coming to high school had to walk. Some used to walk from Freestone hill, the Williamson's, five miles and few had horse and buggies. 90 % of them walked and didn't, weren't able to ride the electric cars from down Cunningham way or in from Forestville or from the Llano District of Santa Rosa. Of course the automobile killed it off and today we have only freight trains on it and very few of those. The electric railroad started from Petaluma, It had

a connection to San Francisco by steam, the old steamer Gold from the Jackson St. wharf. It would leave there at 5 o'clock in the afternoon with our freight and the next morning when they went to work at 8 o'clock we would have freight out of San Francisco. It would take as long as a week to get your freight. And they had the car barns and everything in Petaluma right along side of the Northwestern depot, still there, the terminus. And at every station along the road and every farm they passed through they had small depots where people waited for the cars. Coming in to Sebastopol with a junction point, as I've said before, for Forestville and Santa Rosa. The line up from Petaluma comes through the open fields from Cunningham, through Hessel and along the Petaluma road that was still there. Going to Santa Rosa we run into a peculiar entrance. They started to build the road out of the depot yard on the Santa Rosa road. Went out the Laguna and on the south side of the present highway bridge they drove all the piling for 3 bridges and then they crossed the highway at the auto junk yard, they crossed to the right hand side of the road and filled in a beautiful catfish hole we used to have there they went down that side of the road and when they got to Llano they had to cross back over the steam road again. They graded all this road down that far and suddenly woke up to the fact that there's a law in the state of California that the Southern Pacific got passed to stop the Santa Fe from coming into Oakland and competing with them. This law read that no railroad could pass over another railroad more than 3 times in 9 miles and that was to stop the Santa Fe from coming through Niles canyon. If you ever go thru Niles canyon now you'll see the Santa Fe crossing overhead crossings at Orinda and down through there. They had done all this extensive grading and building of the piling and all and when they suddenly realized that they were breaking the law, because they had a crossing in Sebastopol, they had another crossing out at Llano and when they got to Santa Rosa Avenue in Santa Rosa, Sebastopol Ave in Santa Rosa, at the Creamery, the ice plant I should say, they had to cross the main lines of the SP again, so that was their 3rd crossing in 7 miles. They had to come back and build a route where they go out now to the south of the steam railroad track and they kept to that until they got out to Stony Point Rd and then they went down on the left side of the Santa Rosa/Sebastopol Road til they got to the steam train. Steam tracks rather at the ice plant. When they got there, the railroad people were not gonna let them cross the tracks so they spotted with the steam engine, with the steam ports, their exhaust ports and every time the crew on the electric railroad would go to lay a piece of track over the railroad track they'd run these trains at them and blow this steam about 15/20 ft. on each side of them. And they kept that up for a day or more. The electric railroad in the meantime started way up where the Safeway store is on 4th street and laid tracks down 4th street and built that depot that is now occupied by a drayage company on Wilson at 3rd and then built down to the railroad tracks, the main line of the SP, they had a bridge across the creek at Grace Bros. Brewery and when they got down to the steam tracks they put there and started on the other side, come from Sebastopol and then they tried to lay this piece of track connecting the two pieces of the electric railroad track across the steam road and that's where this fight occurred. Finally they let them cross over. The idea of the resistance was to go into court afterward and try to make them take it out under the law. Nothing was ever done about it and...as it is today. However it was abandoned out here at Wright School house after the Southern Pacific bought the electric railroad they abandoned a part of the electric railroad tracks and used the steam railroad tracks out as far as Wright school. Then when they crossed the road at Wright crossing out there they picked up the steam railroad and went on in to Santa Rosa on the steam railroad so tracks are part of the steam and part electric track were actually taken up and consolidated into the branch line they have now in Santa Rosa, all of which belongs to the Southern

Railroad. The railroad from the north is the same one that goes now into Forestville, only about 10 or 15 years back they abandoned part of it from where the apple dryers are at Manzana on into Forestville because there was no business beyond there.

A: Where is Wright School?
BB: Was where the railroad crosses the highway going to Santa Rosa. Where those wig wags are. There is a new school for retarded children, that is the old Wright School house, yes. Among the railroads we had in Sonoma County was one called the Donahue line, Peter Donahue was a progressive man who built the Union? Iron Works? in San Francisco. The Union Iron Works built a battleship made one of the most remarkable runs in the history of steam ships of any kind. The battleship Oregon was in SF harbor when the Spanish American war started. There was no Panama Canal. They had to have this battleship in Havana, Cuba because the Spanish had a fleet there. Battleship Oregon made a run clear down around South America and through the Straits of Magellan and up the coast and got into the battle of Santiago just in time to enter the battle and chase some of the Spanish battleships away and is considered, of course, we didn't have the high grade engines, the things we have now, that was considered one of the greatest feats ever accomplished by an all metal ship in the history of the world. Donahue came up the Petaluma creek, what is now known as Lakeville and a little railroad came up to Petaluma and as you go down you can see some of it..then the, came up to Lakeville and came into Petaluma then to Santa Rosa and Healdsburg north. Another railroad started at Sausalito called the North Shore Railroad company. They started up to get the lumber business at Freestone, Occidental and end at Cazadero. Came from Sausalito came through Fairfax, Pt. Reyes, Bolinas, Tomales, Valley Ford, Freestone, Occidental and there they had one of the crookedest railroad bridges and one of the highest at that time. You can't see it, its back off the road but in order to get over the hill at Occidental, which was known as the summit, they built a wooden bridge and these bridges were not made out of fallen redwood trees, they were all made out of finely cut bridge timbers, 16, 20s and all sizes. Every bridge on the road was built from fine timber and to get into Occidental they had to rise very fast to Freestone, I didn't know what the rise was most of the time it took two engines to get up the hill to Occidental and they built a bridge on a curve and considered that time one of the highest wooden bridges in the world and it was on quite a decided ?curve as they came into Occidental. Then it run down the canyon where you go to Rio Nido and from there on down there on the way to Cazadero it crossed the river on that bridge where you cross to Duncan's Mills. The other railroad started down at Pt. San Quentin as you come up now across the bridge where the ferries used to be, there was a railroad came in there in competition with this one and into San Rafael and after the two roads combined and it went down to Sausalito where they built a big terminal. The California Northwestern Pacific, the Donahue road, as it was called, they abandoned their terminal in Petaluma Creek and they went down to Tiburon which is just across Richardson Bay from Sausalito and they built up through San Rafael the present road that comes up now and goes as far as I believe, Cloverdale at the present time,the end of the road, no, they go to Fortuna and from there on there is no more passenger service from Eureka to Fortuna they now have passenger service two times a week and they are trying to cut it to once a week. And there is a branch line down into Fort Bragg and they used to run sleeper trains down into Fort Bragg, a huge lumber milling town, the Union Lumber company owned everything for miles and nowadays all they run is the, I can't think now the name of it, a little donkey affair with a combination passenger car and baggage car, the Skunk, they call it. And it runs from Fort Bragg up to Willits to meet

the main line train what is left of it and its only a question of time of course, when the lumber business slows down which is all that is keeping the railroad open today, in the next 25 years there will be no railroad whatever in this part of the country. The district around Camp Meeker was built by boss Meeker himself. he had a sawmill in there and they used oxen for dragging the logs out until about 15-20 years ago and Boss Meeker, I saw the ledgers he kept on the work and he built great stretches of railroad from below Occidental into Monte Rio. He of course was Boss of the whole country through there and whatever Boss Meeker said, why went, and before the railroad was abandoned, when Analy Union High School was set up in 1906-07 we tried to get Occidental to come into Analy High School but Boss Meeker controlled things and he persuaded the people in Occidental that they were not apple growers and berry growers that they were more interested in dairy people and the logical thing for them to do was to ride the train every day (unintelligible)
(tape must have been stopped, begins again with cut off speech)

.....before you hit water now and the boats used to come right into Tomales town and the boats used to come into Bodega Bay and up back of the island to where you cross to go out on the sandbar, right at that bridge, barges used to come in and load potatoes. they raised beef cattle in here and potatoes for San francisco and grain for making flour, there was a flour mill. I ate many a pound of Golden Eagle milling co. flour, that was not a chicken feed plant, that started out as a milling co. there was one in Santa Rosa, that brick bldg. just above the old steam depot. I think Sperry has their chicken feed, that was a Santa Rosa flour mill. Every town had a flour mill. Those are the industries that were started in here by the early settlers then as Red Rock got into potatoes and (meat?) they turned into other things and among them, cleared the land for the growing of crops. I myself helped clear the land from that food stand down there, the Sequoia Food Stand clear back to Baker Lane. I remember the big pine tree that's out there in that vineyard as you go up Sparkes road we left that because it was to big to dig up. Everything was dug out by hand, it wasn't pulled over, blasted or cut off. Land had to be cleared. We had what you call a mattock, its pulled this way and cuts this way, was like a pick only had a sharp wedge on the top and hoe on the bottom. and you hoed and hoed around the roots then you turned it over and chopped the roots off and the tree fell of its own weight and took the roots with it so then you sawed the tree off and the farmer was able to pull the stump out of the ground. That's the way everything you see up to the coast, all those apple orchards and vineyards, all the hillsides were cleared that way by hand. Miles and miles of them. They start planted apples and the apples take eight years to produce and they had to have something in the meantime so then comes, they planted berries. There developed another industry, the berry industry. And they planted vineyards, we had wineries, there was a winery back of the Japanese temple on that corner, (name mentioned?) didn't go back as far as his place, went up Elphick Road (Audience member says: "Joins my place") The Belle View Winery. There were wineries all over. Another beyond the old Gold Ridge School on that corner, the country was covered, it was quite an industry. San Francisco, they had coal on Mt. Diablo but was a soft and sooty coal, My mother in law said it was very dirty to cook with. So they made charcoal, you can still see out here through the hills around Occidental you can see large heavily burnt places in the hillside, in the flats rather, they would cut the oak wood about 30 inches long, split it and put it in piles and cover it with mud and bull rushes to keep it wet, start a fire under it at the bottom and just let enough draft so that the wood wouldn't burn and that fire would slowly go thru the oak wood and turn it into charcoal. What you burn today in your outdoor pits, that's the way its made. The minute that wood shrunk, they had to stay up all night, day and night, watch it

and have tules and straw ready to keep this covered, because the minute that wood shrunk and that mud fell in by the thing that started the burn and you wouldn't have charcoal you would have ashes so there was always somebody up all night long ready to climb up on this burning pile and slap mud and tules and green grass onto wet grass to keep the fire smoldering in there.

Now there are immense industries. You went into Occidental on the lower road from Graton there was a huge barn, there was a turntable for the little narrow gauge road, huge barn just for charcoal and cord wood. 4 horse team used to go thru this town all day long i can hear the bells yet as one of the kids picking berries on Spring Hill Road half asleep on a warm day and hear those bells going jingalinging down the road as the lead of horses march along hauling wood to Santa Rosa and Petaluma. Everybody burned wood. The driers burned pine wood, the apple driers otherwise was cord wood. Those are the industries that developed here about the time I arrived. In 1891 the steam road was put in here from Santa Rosa. On april 14, 1892 there was a population explosion in Sebastopol. You've heard we've got one now, well a big one occurred. There was only about 200 people in this town when the Borbas arrived with ten people that night and dumped them off at half past 6 in the village. We had 3 more later in this town. This Borba family were immigrants. My folks came from the Azore Islands. So are all you people. what I'm going to tell you was how we lived and how your folks lived. Some of you probably saw some of it, some of you didn't. We lived off everything that the Lord supplied, game, watercress, (?) wild mustard when it come up in the Spring. We had our own pigs in the yard. On florence Ave. We lived on Florence Ave. all our lives. We had a cow. We raised our vegetables and in the basement, 6 ft. high basement, those are your warehouses, you'd find salt pork, salt cod, salt salmon, (ferkin?) butter and every Monday, My mother baked 20 loaves of bread. and baked beans and we had beans and fresh bread. that went on no matter where she was, in camps, in berry fields. Sunday night, we had a long table made in the planning mill...

(side two of tape)

BB: we kids would sit there and pull and dirt out of them and those beans would soak all night while her bread was raising. The first thing Monday morning, those beans would go on the back of the stove and the bread would start to cook, bake. Those beans would boil til one or two o'clock in the afternoon. then they went into the oven, at 6 o'clock they were ready to eat and I can tell you honestly you'd never eat baked beans unless you eat Mother Borba's baked beans. That's sounds strange I'll tell you why. One time up at the Native sons of which I'm a 55 year member i told the boys I'm gonna bring you some baked beans. they were back from the army, you know what army beans are they throw them in a pot one minute and pull them out the next and feed them. "Ohhh, whoever heard such thing " and they didn't say it very nice language. Well you fellows never eat beans. Happened that Jim (Rammage?) and Virgil Bucks (?) who were the county treasurer and not the assessor, tax collector, Bucks was, they were native sons and came over on a visit to us along with some others. there were some men from San Francisco after this meeting there were some beans left and I went across the street to the candy store and got these little ice cream buckets with a little handle on them and gave them all some beans and every time i went to san Francisco and met with any of these fellows, these men would always remind me of those beans and Bucks and Jim Rammage, let me know whenever you're gonna have beans. So that was our treat. We all had plenty to eat. I never saw the day and I'm 77 years old, thank the Lord I never worried about where I was going

to sleep and what i was going to eat, but there was lots of good soup, fresh meat we had at regular intervals. I was telling about the days you bought meat, they'd give you suet or bone, well those bones came in very handy because in making all these soups those bones would go into the soup kettle. My dad was very found of the gristle on the bone and had no teeth whatever and was fond of the marrow, so he would clean all that out and those bones, the dog would chew on them and the rag, bottle and sack man would come along, kind of a decrepit individual, decrepit horse and rig crying rags, bottles and sacks, some of you remember and he'd buy these bones and they would go down to the sugar refinery and be made into charcoal to refine sugar.

What we came here for, we had an uncle, lived on Vine Hill. Some of you probably remember Josie Solomon (?), worked at Schmitt's (spelling?) Grocery store, her father was my mother's brother. I don't know, my father and these men, these men, I was going to tell you, these immigrants when they left the Azore Islands, you know how they got here? They didn't come on first class steamers, they came on sail boats, whaling boats they had put in from the Sound, what we call the Sound in the east is the coast of Rhode Island and Massachusetts, that's the Sound, where all the whalers of the world, to tie up there. Those fellows would start from the Sound and go to Greenland and Iceland and up around following the gulf stream which goes up around england and come down and stop at the Azores, after being 3 years boiling all their blubber on the deck and storing it in barrels. Imagine the condition of those ships. turn in at the Azore islands for the last run across the Atlantic. There they would clean up the ship a little bit and get fresh water and everything and those immigrants who were old enough to leave without permission, my mother and her three sisters came across on those whalers. Father was over here. Took them a month to cross. Got becalmed out in the Saragossa Sea. But the funny part of it was that those men who were of military age were liable to be called,they would make arrangements with the whaler to smuggle them off. These whalers carried a Virginia black leaf, small tobacco, and they carried it all those years they went to sea with them to trade because Portugal had a heavy tax on tobacco and salt. At sundown they'd make their arrangements with the smugglers and the ship would sail at sundown over the horizon and the long boats would put back in with tobacco for the smugglers and would smuggle out the young fellows under 18 who wanted to get away from Military duty. They would land in Providence, RI and New Bedford, MASS. they'd heard of the redwood industry out here and a lot coming in, like everybody else there was a surplus and I find that my dad came out here to work up on Ten Mile, Big river, above the Gualala, quite a few of the Portuguese in this country did. Those trees were cut ten-twelve foot off the ground because the oxen couldn't draw them, couldn't draw the butts, the butts tapered like that so they went up 10-12 feet. I remember pictures of home of them and saw the tree off where it was straight so the oxen could drag them along the ground. In the first world war they went back and took those trees down had been there 70 years and made them into wood, there wasn't a tree in there that they had big steam engines to pull them over and drag them in. So after the logging they moved back around the Bay, to Alameda, they were sea faring people on the coast islands and they naturally went along the San Joaquin River and the Sacramento River and around the Bay. My uncle came up here. In Hayward there was nothing you could do, children could do, picking currants was the only thing, and I don't know they allowed children to pick them because they had to be picked when they were ripe. They couldn't pick cucumbers which were raised down there and couldn't pick tomatoes. There was nothing but grain fields all the way into oakland. so my uncle suggested to my dad that since there were berries, hops and grapes to be picked up here,this was the place for him, this family with 8 children. So we came as

I told you and we set up in Sebastopol and started, my dad was a professional pruner and grafter and in the winter time he would prune and grafted trees. And he was considered a professional in that business, and in the summer time he worked in the (?) with us. We would leave home the first of July, later part, as soon as school was out and I got all my school at a library (?) We would leave home with camping equipment, my mother made two big tents and we boys and groceries and all in a tent and father and mother and 3 girls and more groceries. We had a kitchen, we had camping equipment, (?) to take with us camping. Stoves and all. And we'd go into the raspberries, blackberries, hops and grapes. We were gone four months. You know grapes come in october. We would miss a month of school and yet I made my eight years. We were in the fields at 6 o'clock in the morning. We were raised in a family where my mother, the little corporal, was the boss, dad was away working most of the time and when he was with us, he had a notion to chastise us, he wasn't too gentle so mother tended to us. It was a hard and fast rule that you were spoken to three times, twice and the third time something happened to you. I raised one girl, that's all the Lord gave me and she was raised the same way. and I'd chastise her in front of the public, up at Yosemite Valley because she didn't answer when I called to her twice to come away from the edge of O'Shaunessy dam, 238 ft. of ice cold water and the young lady was walking along the edge like you see the kids walking on cement. I said "Jean come away from there." I don't believe she heard me she was concentrating on the water. "Jean come away from there" i went and got her and whipped her so help me right on the edge of the dam, if she and I had gone in together it would have been all right with me , I didn't bring her out, ...she'd done it. By the same token, when she would ask me for a nickel, once in a time I'd had a few, she didn't get them when she asked for them, it isn't good for kids, she'd never cry or whimper i wouldn't let her. She'd always say when daddy, not why? She'd come running to me, daddy can I have an ice cream cone, No. when can I have one. Tomorrow. She'd go pleased as to be. But the next day she'd come down from the grammar school out of breath, daddy today's tomorrow and i want my ice cream cone. And immediately she got a nickel. And that's the way we were raised. We never left the house without asking and being told when to be back until we were 18. We'd say, Mom we're going downtown and I'll be back at half past ten. And you put in your time and you were back. that's how this family survived with no one landing in jail. The nearest was me when the speed cop got me. We lived under that setting, we were happy because we soon learned what was what. Mother would come out in the street with a brush, she'd send us out to get a brush stick, we burned brush to start a fire, makes a nice fire with a piece of newspaper then put in your wood. And she would send us out to the brush pile to get a stick and it wasn't big enough to suit her, we'd go get another one. We soon learned yes was yes and no was no and there was no trouble. It all worked out fine. We cleared land and my dad would prune and my dad would take all the big limbs and lay em in a row. He would tell the man I'll prune your orchard. He worked so fast, and I mean this, he got a dollar and a quarter, dollar and a half, the others got dollar, because he did two men's work. He would say I'll clean your orchard and pick up the brush for so much. Out around Charlies (?) place we would walk out there after school with an axe, hatchet and we would clean the limbs and pick up the brush. That was 2-3 miles out and that would be laid in a row and either the farmer or the express man would bring those limbs into town to our lower lot and we spent our time cutting over 30 cords of wood a year. A cord of wood is 16 ft. long and 4 ft. high. We put up over 500 ft. of wood every year, had to have that to run that family. We used to buy 5 sacks of brown sugar, 8 sacks of white, 10 sacks of beans and 20 sacks of 100 sacks of flour from Santa Rosa or Petaluma and about a ton of potatoes. We'd put those in the Fall when we come with our money from the fields. (?) we had it we used to fish down at the end of the

Laguna. We hunted, went swimming, looked for wild strawberries, wild blackberries and bird's nest and bird's eggs. used to be expert in taking a hummingbird's egg, take a needle, blow a hole in it and blow the inside out, we'd have those sitting in the sawdust. We'd hunt for their nests. For past time, road shows used to come in them days and patent medicine men. I remember one was a Turk, big tall fellow, always wore a cutaway, our doctors them days wore stove pipe hats and our ministers and wore cutaway coats. You knew who they were. Didn't have to have a reverse collar in those days,they were ministers or a doctor. This fellow came in that outfit, had a horse and buggy, had a kerosene lamp he hung on a pole and he would get up in this buggy with his high hat on and his big long coat and say "I am a Turk, I am one of dem people what eats a Christian every morning for breakfast" then away he'd go. He'd put a dollar in package of patent medicine and sell it to a fellow and then he offer a raise to the next one and pretty soon there wouldn't be any dollars raised (?) and they're all buying ointments and...that would do anything in the world, corns and bunions to falling hair. Those are the fellows that used to entertain us. We had the lodge here at that time,the Masons and Odd Fellows and the Grange and the Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT) we didn't call them that we called them the I Often Get Tight. One time, one lodge met up in the hall and the IOGT met the next night and the next day when the lodge went to get a couple cases of Grace Bros. beer it was gone. Whether the IOGT got it or who we don't know. But every boy in town, every young fellow in town belonged to the IOGT. there wasn't anything else to go to, so we lay it to the younger generation. We had racetrack right down where the sewer farm is and we used to swim down, we had a beautiful lake further down, Lake Jonive, had boats, had power boats on at one time, and the town incorporated in 1904 (actually is 1902) and the sewer of course killed that. We had some strange characters in the town, always do, they were drinking. Among them was a fellow who, you know we live in the best town and the best county and the best state and the best country in the world, that covers a lot of territory. These stores used to stay open at night til 10, 11 o'clock, Sundays and holidays. Stranger came to town one day, we had 14 saloons...time he got done visiting those he was pretty well fixed up and he wandered into the store where the local boys were sitting around the pot bellied stove and everybody chewed tobacca, they would spit in the sawdust and argue politics, this fellow was sitting there pretty well loaded up, he couldn't get into the conversation, pretty soon he says "I can whip any darn man in this house" Nobody paid any attention to him. I'm talking about a lot of territory see, and, after a bit he's grumbling to himself "I can whip any son of a gun in this store" Nobody paid any attention to him..soon he says "I can whip any so and so in this town. A fellow got up and wham, and says "excuse me pardner you took in too much territory that time" That's my fix when I tell you this is the best town on the face of the earth. ...as far as the ...school is in Santa Rosa, there's 3 days in the year that the wind don't blow in Petaluma but none of the inhabitant have been there those 3 days. As you wend toward Healdsburg and Cloverdale it gets hotter and hotter until you come out in the fog at..there's not a place I don't believe on the face of the earth, and that's lot of territory, and I didn't see much of it, but I read a lot, where for 365 days a year you get what we get in Sebastopol, the kind of temperatures and the weather, sure we have rain but we wouldn't have green grass and the crops if we didn't. If you've got money to chase...you could do better but I doubt it. Among these characters we had a Latin scholar, burned to death, all they got was his head and his hands, burned to death on Mill Station Rd. Name's Pete Jackson McClay (?) an English scholar and he liked very much to get ahold of a priest or doctor anybody who knew Latin and go into a session with him and when he would get on a binge his battle cry when he died was he wanted the following epitaph on his grave, Here lies buried Pete Jackson

McClay, the darndest rascal ever made, still on his grave when you passed by thought he was always alive he was always dry. And we had Bill Garrison, horse trainer, had a glass eye, you know 50 years ago, the glass eye didn't mind very well, they'd be looking this way and Bill would be looking that way. He was a horse trainer for Guerne, Guerneville that where it got its name. he would always be on a tear and all disheveled and looking a mess and he would say "oh Lord of love, look down from above and pity my condition, send me down two damn good hounds and plenty of ammunition." And that was his battle cry. Then we had a shoemaker, Andy Johnson, a Dane who had gone to Germany and learned his business. He was a shoemaker,not a cobbler. He'd measure your feet and make you shoes. He was addicted to drinking. He said he paid the equivalent of $70 to an American shoemaker and lived with the shoemaker. At the end of the internship they took him down to the guild hall which are the unions in Europe. Locked him in a room with nails and leather and told him what they wanted. If he couldn't bring out a pair of shoes to fit the master shoemaker, back he went to work 6 months for nothing again for his board, til he could make a pair of shoes. When this man would get loaded up he would come into the cigar store where I worked and play pool. Everybody in the town would stop him "Andy, why do this? Such a competent man as you, such a good shoemaker, why do you do these things?" So he would sing them this song (Bill sings)"What is the use of repining, whertus or wiltus away (sounds like)? (exact words unintelligible) tomorrow the sun may be shining although it looks cloudy today" In other words I'm drunk today but I may be sober tomorrow. And we had Dave Seely who owned a horse, a pacer, out of Dan Patch, one of the world famous pacers. and they used to start at the Methodist Church, that was a sandy road this deep, was downhill all the way, that big cut that you see at the Methodist Church was cut out when the railroad came in and filled right off here, the electric depot was 4 ft. lower down than it is today, it was all fill from that cut by the Methodist Church. They would race downhill and where the Wetch Bros. have that agency, that insurance agency was a livery stable and that's about where they'd stop and the sand was about this deep. Old Dave Seely (spelling?) had one of those regular racing carts, where they sit with their feet around the horse and legs around the horse like that, you'd go up and down the street, hup, hup, hup and that's why we called him old Hup, Hup. We had a city clerk who graduated in the same class as Hiram Johnson, from Stanford University. It was my understanding, I wouldn't vouch for this was that he had a blue ribbon on his diploma when he graduated and Hiram Johnson did not, a very brilliant man, but liquor got him. The college oil can, I don't know how many of you know what they talked about when they say college oil can. In the old days there was no electricity and every student had to have oil for his student lamp, you've seen them, they were about so high on a rod and they had the lamp on one side and a tube running over and a camera casting on the other and a bolt to set it where the student wanted. And Mayfield, there is a State law that there is no saloons within a mile of a university. So Mayfield which is now a part of Palo Alto was a mile away. And these students would go out to get the oil and land in Mayfield and bring in liquor into the college and that's the joke we used to hear when I was a youngster, you never hear it now, about the college oil can. And this man was a victim of the college oil can. He came to this town, was a brilliant young lawyer, set up in business, had delirium tremens, terribly. His poor old mother would come and she would buy him clothes and clean him up in his office and it was an awful mess. He sit and cry and promise to quit. And I remember one night at the Methodist Church when they used to have the old revival meetings that all the kids in town of course, that was another thing they attended quite religiously. The boys would take a rubber band and you how they people were full of enthusiasm and would jump up and yell Amen, brother, glory

hallelujah. They'd take a rubber band and a little beebee shot and wham. This man one night, heard six shots in back of the church, bang, bang, etc. and he'd come in twirling a 32 pistol on his finger and saying he just killed a buck and six squaws in the pine trees back of the church, he was in that terrible condition. he stood on Pease corner and shot at a skunk going up a pole that he was across the street where that barber shop is, where KD's studio was, and the bullet was in that pole. And he would take a horse trough, longer than this thing, full of water and see skunks under it and take it and turn it the thing over in two minutes. He would wear a gunny sack around his waist, no hat or coat and a shovel on his back, and its county roads? broken down to the streets of Sebastopol, opening the ditches....and finally he'd been threatened with arrest and promised to quit...finally the constable, marched him off one night to jail, didn't lock him up. He promised this time to quit..? and he quit like that. Went on swamping ground smooth, never drank anymore. we in the Native Sons took him in, got him straightened up, we may have, major part of electing him city clerk for 16 years and nobody ever run against him but once and a very prominent man in t he town ran against him. Nobody ever tried it again. He saved this town thousands of dollars, he would sit down in front of the Board. We had a lawyer here, let's just say he was a lawyer. they'd be reading an ordinance and John would say "you can't do that" what's a matter John "I'm not your attorney, go talk to your attorney" But they would note the point in the ordinance in which John said you can't do that and that's all he would say and they'd go to the attorney and say "listen somethings wrong here what is it?" He saved the town lots of trouble and lots of money. I remember the night he died...and he was the last of the characters, we have some characters in the town...of course. and we only had, I used to drive cows, the things we did, we had our cows, I used to drive 9 cows for as much as 50 cents a month down back of the hospital. We'd go in Walker Avenue and would go a mile back and in the spring when they'd be up and their stomachs full but the grass was... they'd be out in the pasture still eating and we'd have to to through sticker, and we'd be barefoot. i went barefoot until I was 16, wish I was now, we'd have to go through stickers in these fields at those cows and we got 4 bits a month to take them in the morning and back in the evening. And when we asked for a dollar, they were gonna horse whip us, we were terrible boys. Then I drove cows back of the high school, 9 of them, way back in those green fields you see back there. We had a cow of our own and we drove (for)the neighbors to come along. There was a man by the name of Dede Dore (?) high school store stand, had a high board fence around his place and it was loaded with trash. One of the things that kids used to annoy the life out of him. One time he shot at someone with a shotgun. We'd go by down the pasture we'd yell Dede Dore, commodore Dede Dore and he'd start cursing. We'd be down there for a half hour, hour and back and he'd still be cursing. When we'd go by we'd give him a last round for the night and I guess he cursed all the next night, I don't know.

This family of ours, I don't tell you this because I want to talk about my family, I'm talking about the immigrants in general. The Germans, Irish or anybody else. Remember that potato famine in Ireland? When the English burned down the villages because the Irish didn't have enough potatoes to pay their debts. A million and half come to the United States and landed in the East and were not welcome. Irish were two bits a dozen because they took the work of the local people, millions of em. The same things happened with the Chinese on this coast, they come to build the railroads, the railroads were built in what was it ? '60 and they were built by the Irish to St. Joe, Missouri and Crocker, Huntington, Hopkins and can't think of the fourth man (Leland Stanford) the big 4 who run California, they started the Central pacific railroad and they started from Sacramenta and brought in boat load after boat load, whole sailing ship load of chinese, thousands of them to built this railroad. They

got paid by the mile and history says they got paid so much a mile for level land, so much for hill land and so much for mountains. So every prairie dog hill they could head for they'd head for. And those roads were like this because every time they saw a prairie dog mound they could call a hill they got paid for a hill and it was a good size hill they got paid for mountains. And they built and met at Promontory Pt. Utah, the Irish and Chinese. Stanford was so hurt by the way he cleaned up the country, after he built Stanford University... The Chinese then scattered into the fields and camps, first into the gold mines and they followed the hoggish Americans and I experienced this as a kid. You wanted to get strawberries, you stayed behind and let the hoggish boys go ahead, strawberries only grew about that high and you had to pull the leaves over. The wild boys would tear through those,with a lard bucket, what berries you could see but the smart boys come along behind and get the berries. Well the white man went through all these mining camps, turned the gravel over and shot and killed and murdered and done everything for his gold they left a lot behind and the Chinese patiently went through that and made lots of money and they begin on the Chinese. The Chinese would come 10 cents a dozen. I threw rocks at them when I was a kid and we used to torment them and do everything to em they were not an aggressive people we never bothered the Japanese people believe me. So the immigrants of any kind were 10 cents a dozen because when they came in the country they were able to live, they had a country where living conditions as poor as they were, were better then where they came from and the Americans here a little wild and felt rich. They were able to take work from him because they were able to work for less. We were one of those families. My dad got a dollar a day in 1892. He come here with ten people to feed. Think of it. (Moderator: That 's makes me think that our vicar is not underpaid) BB; And that's where I say we used to collect chards and all those things, we lived, and I'm satisfied yet that we live in the best town in the best county and the best state, we all know that and the best country in the world Sebastopol. Now if there are any questions?

M: I would appreciate if you would mention to these people that when you came here that Sebastopol had its own Chinatown.

BB: Of yes, there were 600 of them at one time. in Bloomfield, the town today has 25 people in it. They done the potato digging, they trained hops, they done all the labor, like now we send for mexicans because we won't do any hoeing, stoop work. The run the hop driers and done the apple drying, but they came out of the gold camps into the potato fields and Bloomfield had 600 so history says, and we had two Chinatowns here. That road that goes in to the vinegar works on the chamber of commerce building that was Brown alley, Brown's Chinatown. Those 11 houses in there and a joss house right at the end. Joss house is now down on Hudson's avenue, some church people bought it and made a church, I don't know if its been torn down or not, on the left there. Then there was another one in where the Flying A station is on the corner or Petaluma avenue and Santa Rosa (Avenue)

(afterword)

"Paul Borba speaking: this tape given to me Feb. 17, 1974 in memory of my uncle W.S. Borba of Sebastopol, California by his widow, Willow and daughter, Regina

end of tape.